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## KOOTASCA Head Start

Proudly Serving Communities: Greenway / Deer River / Grand Rapids / Northome / International Falls

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# KOOTASCA Head Start Parent Handbook

*Upon request, this information will be made available in alternative formats, such as, Braille, audio, electronic, or large print.*

KOOTASCA Community Action Inc is an Equal Opportunity Provider & Employer.

MN RELAY: 7-1-1 or 1-800-627-3529

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## **WELCOME TO KOOTASCA HEAD START**

We are licensed or certified by the State of Minnesota in Itasca and Koochiching counties. We serve children 6-weeks old to age 4 as of September 1st. Our hours and days of operation are site specific. Parents receive this information in a summer Parent Letter, Home Visit, Registration and/or Open House. Below is a table outlining our sites:

<b>Location</b>	<b>License #</b>	<b>Infant</b>	<b>Toddler</b>	<b>Preschool</b>
Grand Rapids Early Childhood HUB	1025915	8	8	140
Kootasca Head Start International Falls	801136	8	8	20
Kootasca Head Start Deer River	2000315	0	0	20
Kootasca Head Start Greenway	2001645	0	0	60

KOOTASCA Head Start offers a variety of free program options that are state and federally funded. Programming includes home visits, classroom days, family activities and opportunities to volunteer in the classroom. We encourage all parents/guardians to get involved in program planning and decision-making through participation as representatives on the Policy Council. Enrollment is based on a variety of factors such as the child's age as of September 1st, the household gross income, or the family's size and needs.

Our program is family-focused and provides quality early childhood experiences for your children and support services for the entire family.

### **ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE PROCEDURE**

- a) Parents/Guardians must walk their children to the classroom and sign them in when dropping them off, as well as sign them out when they leave. Be certain staff know your child has arrived.
- b) Children will only be released to an authorized adult (age 18 or older) named on the Emergency & Child Release form. A photo I.D. will be required in order for your child to be released.
- c) Children may be picked up by a sibling who is listed on the Emergency & Child Release form as an authorized adult. Siblings picking up children must be age 16 or older.
- d) Transportation to and from the center is the family's responsibility. Some sites may offer transportation for children who are age four as of September 1st.
- e) If transportation is offered at your site, parents/guardians must walk their child to and from the bus or van. Children will not be dropped off at home (or other designated address) unless an authorized adult is there to meet them. Children will be returned to the center and law enforcement will be called if staff are unable to contact an authorized adult.
- f) If no one comes to pick up the child, an attempt to contact the parent/guardian(s) will be made. If they are not available, each person on the emergency list will be called. Once all options have been exhausted, the staff will call local law enforcement after 15 minutes of no responses.
- g) If a parent/guardian requests a new pick-up person, it must be in writing via, text, writing, etc. Must present a photo ID.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

- a) Federal guidelines have set a 90% attendance standard for all children in our classrooms. For example, in a month with 20 possible days to attend, a child would need to attend 18 days to have 90% attendance. Our program helps prepare children for their entrance into kindergarten and attendance is not only required, but children that attend regularly have better academic outcomes!

- b) When your child is absent, or if you know your child will be absent ahead of time, please let the classroom teacher know as soon as possible. Our staff will contact you if they don't receive a message by 10:00am.
- c) If a child is absent for three consecutive days, or has irregular attendance, your Family Advocate or teacher will contact you to discuss reasons for absence and work with your family to problem solve.
- d) A child may be dropped from the program due to a lack of attendance if absences persist despite the program exhausting all efforts. This decision is made at the discretion of the program director.

### **CHILDCARE PROGRAM PLAN**

- a) Parents/Guardians of enrolled children may visit the classroom any time during operating hours.
- b) Parents/Guardians are welcome to volunteer in the classroom.
- c) The classroom's daily schedule will provide a variety of learning experiences to help your child feel secure and independent. A typical classroom schedule includes:
  - i) Tooth brushing and hand washing.
  - ii) Large and small group activities.
  - iii) Active and quiet times.
  - iv) Rest time.
  - v) Indoor and outdoor play times.
  - vi) Time for children to select their own activities and for teacher-directed activities.
- d) Classroom staff document each child's progress in their social, emotional, cognitive and physical development through daily observations.
- e) Students will go outside each day unless the outside temperature is below zero or the wind chill is below zero (staff will use discretion).
- f) Parents may review the center's Child Care Program Plan, available at each site, upon request.

### **DUAL LANGUAGE POLICY**

- a) For an infant or toddler dual language learner, we will include teaching practices that focus on the development of the home language, when there is a teacher with appropriate language competency, and experiences that expose the child to English.
- b) For a preschool age dual language learner, we will include teaching practices that focus on both English language acquisition and the continued development of the home language.
- c) If staff do not speak the home language of all children in the learning environment, we will include steps to support the development of the home language for dual language learners such as having culturally and linguistically appropriate materials available and other evidence-based strategies. We will work to identify volunteers who speak children's home language/s who could be trained to work in the classroom to support children's continued development of the home language.
- d) When performing screening and assessments, all necessary steps will be taken to ensure a child receives a screening in their home language.

### **BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE POLICY**

- a) Staff will always model positive, acceptable behavior that is consistent with the behavior expected from the children.
- b) Staff use guidance techniques that are developmentally appropriate for the children they work with, such as:
  - i) Give a child the choice of two acceptable activities.
  - ii) Help the child with words to express themselves.
  - iii) Model, teach, and practice expected behavior with children.
  - iv) Acknowledge, identify & give encouragement for desirable behavior.

- v) support children in problem solving steps.
- vi) Redirection
- c) Staff will use techniques from social emotional curriculum to help children learn how to problem solve and understand their own behavior.
- d) Staff are responsible for the safety of children and co-workers.
- e) Staff will observe and document persistent unacceptable behavior of a child using a variety of tools. Staff will work with the family to develop a behavior intervention plan.
- f) The following actions are prohibited at KOOTASCA Head Start:
  - i) Corporal punishment, which includes, but is not limited to:
    - (1) Rough Handling
    - (2) Shoving
    - (3) Hair Pulling
    - (4) Ear Pulling
    - (5) Shaking
    - (6) Slapping
    - (7) Kicking
    - (8) Biting
    - (9) Pinching
    - (10) Hitting
    - (11) Spanking
  - ii) Emotional Abuse
    - (1) Name Calling
    - (2) Ostracism
    - (3) Shaming
    - (4) Making derogatory remarks about a child or the child's family
    - (5) Using language that threatens, humiliates, or frightens the child.
  - iii) Separation from the group, unless other methods have been attempted.
  - iv) Punishment for lapses in toilet habits.
  - v) Withholding food, light, warmth, clothing, medical care, toileting, and physical activity.
  - vi) Use of physical restraint, other than to physically hold a child where containment is necessary to protect a child or others from harm.
  - vii) Use of mechanical restraint, such as tying.
  - viii) Use of contraindicated restraints.
  - ix) Children with Developmental Disabilities – (9503.055, subpart 6) For children with developmental disabilities or children under the age of five, as specified in parts 9525.0004 to 9525.0036, the standards governing the use of aversive and deprivation procedures in parts 9525.2700 to 9525.2810 apply.

## **HOME VISITS AND CONFERENCES**

- a) Parent/Guardians are required to participate in a home visit before the child's first day, two parent teacher conferences, and a final home visit.
- b) At each meeting, teachers and parents/guardians will discuss your child's physical, cognitive, social and emotional progress and develop individual learning plans and goals.
- c) All parents/guardians will receive a written assessment of their child's intellectual, physical, social and emotional development.
- d) Parents/Guardians are encouraged to call staff at any time with questions or concerns.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

- a) KOOTASCA Head Start will ensure that written permission is obtained from each child's parent/guardian before taking the child on a field trip requiring transportation.
- b) In addition, parental permission will be acquired before each occasion of research, experimental procedure, or public relations activity involving a child.
- c) Staff will take Emergency and Child Release forms, and any applicable medications and first aid backpack on all field trips.
- d) Extra volunteers may be recruited for field trips.

## **REST POLICY**

- a) Rest time will be implemented based on an age-appropriate approach for each child in the classroom.
- b) There will be a 30-minute quiet/rest time in each classroom for preschool children. Any child who does not want to rest on their cot may do quiet activities.
- c) After 60 minutes from the start of scheduled rest time, any sleeping children will be gently woken.
- d) You may choose to individualize your child's rest time, please talk to your child's teacher about a Rest Time Exemption form.

## **PET POLICY**

- a) Classrooms may have fish as classroom pets.
- b) Visiting animals will be allowed to come into the classrooms under the following conditions:
  - i) Any pet visit will be included on the lesson plan and you will be notified the week before.
  - ii) Personal pet owners must submit a copy of their pets' up-to date vaccination record by the scheduled visit.
- c) If there are enrolled children with allergies in the classroom of scheduled animal visit, please note that any health and safety needs of the children will come first and may impact the ability to have animals in the classroom.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

- a) Classrooms are NO PHOTO ZONES.
- b) Each site may have a designated photo area for special events.
- c) Written permission will be acquired in the event photos or videos will be taken of your child for public relation purposes.
- d) This policy has been put in place for the safety and well-being of all our staff, students, and their families.

## **HEALTH CARE SUMMARY & IMMUNIZATION RECORDS**

- a) All immunizations must be up-to-date at the time of enrollment or the first day of care. Immunization catch up plans are accepted for children who are behind schedule. Exemption forms are available upon request.
- b) Families are required to update their child's physical and health records annually, or whenever the child is due for an exam.
- c) Physicals, hearing, and vision check-ups are required annually for children three and older. Any child under three will follow the MDH Child Check-up Schedule.
- d) Dental exams are required every 12 months beginning at 12 months of age or eruptions of the first tooth.
- e) Our staff will follow up with you if your child is not current on early childhood screenings, physicals, or dental exams.

## **MEDICATION POLICY**

- a) Parents/Guardians are encouraged to give their children any required medication at home.

- b) Before **KOOTASCA** Head Start staff can administer either prescription or non-prescription medications, a written permission and instruction form must be obtained. Any prescription medication requires a current prescription and completed documentation from a medical provider.
- c) If your child requires medication during school hours, it must be approved by the health manager before your child may attend school.
- d) Medication must be in its original container, labeled with the child's name, with clearly written dosages and instructions on the container. Staff will review medication with you monthly.
- e) Medicine must be delivered to the teacher and may not remain in the child's backpack or cubby during class time.
- f) All medication is stored out of reach of children.

## **NUTRITION POLICY**

- a) KOOTASCA Head Start will provide USDA approved meals and snacks daily.
- b) Meals and snacks will be served either family style or pre-plated.
- c) Parents/Guardians are welcome and encouraged to join your child at mealtimes. Advanced notice is needed to ensure food availability.

## **STANDARD FULL CIVIL RIGHTS STATEMENT**

- a) In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.
- b) Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.
- c) To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:
  - (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
  - (2) fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
  - (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

## **SAFETY POLICY**

- a) KOOTASCA Head Start staff conduct daily and monthly classroom & playground inspections for possible hazards and correct them.
- b) If medical needs are above staff training, or if a child is in danger 9-1-1 will be called.
- c) Parents/Guardians will be notified immediately if their child needs medical attention or is being transported by emergency services.
- d) Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing of any injury or incident.

- e) All staff are certified in Pediatric First Aid and Infant and Child CPR and will administer first aid as trained.
- f) In case of poisoning, the Poison Control Center will be called, staff will follow their instructions and notify parent/guardian.
- g) KOOTASCA Head Start has a Crisis Management Plan for each site that is mandated by the State of Minnesota. Listed are the drills that take place:
  - i) Fire
  - ii) Tornado
  - iii) Lock Down
  - iv) Evacuation
- h) KOOTASCA Head Start has a missing person procedure that is available upon request at each site.

## **VEHICLE SAFETY & SAFE DRIVING**

- a) Keep your child rear-facing until your child outgrows the rear-facing height or weight limits of the car seat. Most convertible seats have limits that will permit children to ride rear-facing for 2 years or more.
- b) Keep your child in a forward-facing car seat and continue using the harness straps until your child reaches the manufacturer's height and weight limits. This usually happens when a child is between the ages of 4 and 7, depending on their height and weight.
- c) After your child outgrows a forward-facing car seat with a harness, your child should use a booster seat. This is usually somewhere between ages 4 and 7.
- d) It's amazing how fast children grow! Your child may look big enough to ride in the front seat, but the back seat is the safest place for children under age 13 to sit, regardless of their size.
- a) Distracted driving is any activity that takes your attention away from driving safely.
- b) Using a phone while you are driving is very unsafe. You are more likely to be in a motor vehicle crash.

## **PEDESTRIAN SAFETY**

- c) Use the sidewalk whenever possible, and if there isn't a sidewalk, walk on the edge of the street facing traffic.
- d) Whenever they are available, use marked crosswalks to cross the street, and look left-right-left for vehicles or bikes before crossing.
- e) Make sure you never play, push or shove others when you walk around traffic.
- f) Everyone should watch the road, not their phones.

## **SCHOOL BUS SAFETY**

- a) If your child is riding the bus, your child should arrive at the bus stop at least 5 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. Teach them to play it SAFE:
  - i) Stay five steps away from the curb.
  - ii) Always wait until the bus comes to a complete stop and the bus driver signals you to board.
  - iii) Face forward after finding a seat on the bus.
  - iv) Exit the bus when it stops and look left-right-left for cars before crossing a street.
- b) For more information: [Keeping Children Safe In Vehicles \(hhs.gov\)](https://www.hhs.gov/keeping-children-safe-in-vehicles/)

## **SCHOOL CLOSING PROCEDURE**

- a) During inclement weather, listen to your local radio or television stations for delayed starts or school closings.
- b) If your local school district closes or calls for a delayed start due to weather, KOOTASCA Head Start will also be closed. Some sites may provide Virtual Learning.

## **GENERAL EXCLUSION GUIDELINES FOR ILL CHILDREN/STAFF**

- a) A full illness exclusion procedure is available upon request.
- b) Periodic health checks are completed for enrolled children. Health Checks may include:
  - i) Reported or observed changes in behavior of the child or in the appearance of the child from the previous day at home or the previous day's attendance at child care.
  - ii) Skin rashes, impetigo, itching or scratching, or the presence of one or more live crawling lice.
  - iii) A temperature check if the child appears ill.
  - iv) Other signs or symptoms of illness and injury such as drainage from eyes, vomiting, diarrhea, cuts/lacerations, pain, or feeling ill.
- c) Children may not attend school if:
  - i) Illness – Unable to participate in routine activities or needs more care than can be provided by the childcare/staff.
  - ii) Fever:
    - (1) Auxiliary (armpit) temperature: 100° F or higher
    - (2) Oral/Temporal temperature: 101° F or higher
    - (3) Rectal temperature: 102° F or higher
  - iii) Live head lice
  - iv) Diarrhea
  - v) Vomiting
  - vi) Mouth Sores with Drooling
  - vii) Rash with Fever or Behavior Change
  - viii) Eye Drainage
  - ix) Unusual Color of Skin, Eyes, Stool, or Urine
- d) If a child becomes sick at school, they will be separated from the group and the parent /guardian or authorized adult will be called by the staff, to have the child picked-up.
- e) It is the parent/guardian responsibility to notify your child's teacher if your child has a contagious disease within 24 hours of the diagnosis.
- f) Parents/Guardians will be notified if there is an exposure to a contagious illness.

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

- a) Volunteer participation- also known as in-kind is a donation of time, materials or other services which otherwise would have to be paid for by the program. Our funding requires us to track volunteer participation. In-Kind is a way for you to give back to the program. Here is a list of ways you can be involved:
  - i) Classroom Volunteer
  - ii) Parent Education Workshops
  - iii) Participation in Special Events
  - iv) Family First Events (FFE)
  - v) Field Trips
  - vi) Policy Council

## **MANDATED REPORTING**

- a) All Kootasca Head Start staff are mandated reporters. A mandated reporter must report to County Social Services or the County Sheriff's Department if they suspect abuse or neglect of a child.
- b) If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1.
- c) Questions about our license, concerns or grievances about a child's care should be brought to the immediate attention of the site contact or one of the outside agencies listed below:
  - i) Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Family (651) 539-8222

- ii) Itasca County Child Care Licensing (218) 327-5559
- iii) Koochiching County Child Care Licensing (218) 283-7000

## **ALCOHOL AND DRUG POLICY**

- a) Drugs and alcohol are prohibited at all KOOTASCA Head Start sites.
- b) If staff suspect parents/guardians are under the influence of drugs or alcohol when dropping off or picking up your child, it is our legal responsibility to contact police immediately.
- c) Smoking/Vaping is prohibited on KOOTASCA Head Start grounds.

## **KOOTASCA HEAD START PARTNERS**

- a) Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) - The Minnesota Department of Education helps ensure that all Minnesota families with infants, toddlers and preschool children experiencing developmental delays or disabilities have access to early intervention services close to home when they need them. This is accomplished through the implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated statewide system of local interagency early intervention committees and service providers. The school district partnership provides us with access to the school nurse, speech pathology, occupational therapy, physical therapy and other related services.
- b) County Health & Human Services Department - Public Health provides consultation, technical assistance and training.
- c) Mental Health Services - KOOTASCA Head Start wants each family to have emotional, psychological, physical and family wellness. A licensed mental health professional will visit each classroom. They may provide training for staff and families.
- d) Adult Basic Education (ABE) - Adult Basic Education provides GED preparation services and other basic education opportunities that help adults achieve personal education and career goals.

## **OPERATIONS MANUAL**

- a) The Operations Manual is available for review by parents/guardians at each site upon request.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN BULLETIN BOARD**

- a) A parent/guardian bulletin board is located at each site. The board will contain a copy of our parent/community complaint procedure, current childcare license, monthly menu, Justice For All Poster, WIC Poster, information about our Policy Council, upcoming community and program events, etc.

## **ANNUAL NOTIFICATIONS PROVIDED TO PARENTS**

- a) Allergy Prevention and Response
  - i) KOOTASCA Head Start will obtain documentation of any known allergy from the child's parent or legal guardian or the child's source of medical care. If a child has a known allergy, KOOTASCA Head Start will maintain current information about the allergy in the child's record and develop an individual childcare program plan with the child's family. The individual childcare program plan will include but not be limited to a description of the allergy, specific triggers, avoidance techniques, symptoms of an allergic reaction, and procedures for responding to an allergic reaction, including medication, dosages, and a doctor's contact information.
  - ii) KOOTASCA Head Start will ensure that each staff person responsible for carrying out the individual childcare program plan review and follow it. Documentation of a staff person's review will be kept on file.
  - iii) At least yearly or following any changes made to allergy-related information in the child's records, KOOTASCA Head Start will update the child's individual childcare program plan and inform each staff person who is responsible for carrying out the individual childcare program plan of the change.

KOOTASCA Head Start will keep on site documentation that a staff person was informed of a change.

- iv) A child's allergy information will be available, including on site, on field trips, or during transportation. A child's food allergy information will be readily available to a staff person in the area where food is prepared and served to the child.
  - v) KOOTASCA Head Start will contact the child's parent or legal guardian as soon as possible in any instance of exposure or allergic reaction that requires medication or medical intervention. KOOTASCA Head Start will call emergency medical services when epinephrine is administered to a child while in KOOTASCA Head Start's care.
- b) Handling and Disposal of Bodily Fluids
- i) Surfaces that encounter potentially infectious bodily fluids, including blood and vomit, will be cleaned and disinfected. Disinfection will be done by rinsing or wiping with a solution of one-fourth cup chlorine bleach plus water to equal one gallon, or an equivalent product.
  - ii) Blood-contaminated material will be disposed of in a plastic bag with a secure tie.
  - iii) Sharp items used for a child with special care needs will be disposed of in a "sharps container." The sharps container will be stored out of reach of a child;
  - iv) KOOTASCA Head Start has the following bodily fluid disposal supplies in the center: disposable gloves, disposal bags, and eye protection.
  - v) KOOTASCA Head Start provides annual training to staff on universal precautions to reduce the risk of spreading infectious disease. Training is documented in each staff person's personnel file.
- c) Emergency Preparedness
- i) KOOTASCA Head Start has developed and written individual Child Care Emergency Plans for each childcare site. Each Plan was written on a form developed by the Department of Human Service.
  - ii) Each Plan includes:
    - (1) Procedures for an evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, or lockdown.
    - (2) A designated relocation site and evacuation route.
    - (3) Procedures for notifying a child's parent or legal guardian of the evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, or lockdown, including procedures for reunification with families.
    - (4) Accommodations for a child with a disability or a chronic medical condition.
    - (5) Procedures for storing a child's medically necessary medicine that facilitates easy removal during an evacuation or relocation.
    - (6) Procedures for continuing operations in the period during and after a crisis.
    - (7) Procedures for communicating with local emergency management officials, law enforcement officials, or other appropriate state or local authorities.
  - iii) Annual Training is provided at staff orientation, as well as when changes are made to the Plan.
  - iv) Drills are conducted according to the Minnesota State requirements. The date and time of the drills are documented.
  - v) Each Child Care Emergency Plan is reviewed and updated annually. Documentation of the annual emergency plan review is maintained in the program's administrative records.
  - vi) The Child Care Emergency Plan is included as a part of KOOTASCA Head Start's policies and procedures and is maintained in the Green Licensing Binder at each site for all staff and parents upon request.
  - vii) The relocation site and evacuation route are posted in a visible place as part of the written procedures for emergencies and accidents.